



CARVED FONT CASE, IN NEWINGTON CHURCH, KENT.

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SIR.—Few persons will be inclined to dispute the soundness of the advice often given in your pages, as to the benefit to be derived from seeing the interior of every church which you may be near. Business frequently taking me to different parts of the country, I seldom omit examining the interior of every church near the place in which I may be staying for the time, and it is really surprising how great a mass of information may be thus obtained: however unpromising the outward appearance may be, it is rare but something valuable may be found in the interior, sometimes merely a moulding, or the capital and base of a pier, at others a good piscina or sedilia, in many churches a handsome font, and occasionally a font-case, such as that forming the accompanying illustration. This very curious article of church furniture (if I may so call it) is in the church at Newington, in Kent, a small village about three miles from Hythe (which latter place, by the way, has a church well worth a special visit, the chancel being a beautiful specimen of early English, with a good undercroft in the same style). Newington Church is in a miserable state, encumbered with unsightly pews and huge galleries, green with damp at the lower part of the walls, and covered with

whitewash on the other parts—in fact, with nothing worthy of notice, except the font-case, which is a very curious and fine specimen of late wood carving. At first sight it has every appearance of a pulpit, being about the same height, and placed against one of the piers of the nave. It is of oak, hexagonal in plan, and I am sorry to add, painted and varnished. Two of the sides form the door, which opening much after the fashion of a corner cupboard, discloses the font, a perfectly plain piece of masonry, reaching about half the height of the case. The top moulding of the case is evidently of a more recent date than the rest of the work, and I am inclined to think that there has been some more important termination which has been destroyed. Another of these cases, very similar to that at Newington, may be found in the adjoining parish church of Cheriton, and a third at Ticehurst, in Sussex, where the case is panelled on both sides, and of which you gave an engraving of one of the interior panels lately. Here the oak is left in its natural state, without any embellishment from paint. It may be as well to add that Ticehurst Church has a good tower and north porch, some tolerable windows, and very good piers and arches in the nave, but the whole building is much in want of repair.

WM. CAVELER.

THE EARLY ARCHITECTURE OF ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY CHURCH.

So long ago as 1833 the Messrs. Buckler, well known as zealous antiquaries, intimated, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, their intention of publishing an inquiry into the history of the Norman architecture of St. Alban's Abbey Church. This intention they have now realized; and in doing so, they have produced a very important volume, and made clear several interesting points, especially this, that there were two towers at the west end.*—"No conjecture," say our authors, "as to the former existence of towers in union with the west front was ever promulgated,—a fact which would not be deemed remarkable if it were not for the elaborate and valuable engravings of this church published in the year 1810 by the Society of Antiquaries, in which the fragments of the one towards the south are accurately delineated, but evidently without having been understood. That the same relics should up to this time have escaped recognition as having belonged to a tower is perhaps not wonderful, on account of their partial concealment by the walls of a dwelling-house, which has been at-

* "A History of the Architecture of the Abbey Church of St. Alban, with especial reference to the Norman structure." By I. C. Buckler and C. A. Buckler. Longman and Co. Paternoster-row, 1857.